

How Her War Nursing Has Cured the Unhappy Czarina's Mind



The Czarina of Russia, in Her Imperial State Costume, Showing the Sad, Worried Expression Which the Skill of the Court Photographer Could Not Conceal.

St. Petersburg, August 1.

It is no secret that the mind of the Czarina of Russia has been seriously affected for many years past. She was subject to a marked form of melancholia, with other mental peculiarities. Physicians who had examined her feared that she was drifting into hopeless insanity.

And now, miracle of miracles! Her mental sickness has been completely cured by the war. The which has brought such unspeakable woe and misery to millions of people has brought relief to the once unhappy Czarina.

It is the serious hard work she has been doing as a war nurse that has benefited the Czarina's mind. Coming into close contact with pain and grim reality, with human patience and human weakness has lifted her out of her life of morbid self-concentration and exaggerated terrors, and made her a normal human being.

The Czarina has gone into war nursing in a most serious and efficient manner. She has established a hospital of her own, known as "the Court Hospital," at Tsarskoe Selo, the village where the famous Summer palace of the Czar is situated.

When the war broke out the Czarina, who is of a very sympathetic and impressionable nature, was horrified at the accounts of slaughter and suffering that reached her. At first she was nearly prostrated by these stories, and her condition became more serious than ever.

"What can I do? It is so dreadful! It is so dreadful!" moaned the poor nerve-racked Empress.

The response of her entourage to these outbursts was to smother her with every care and luxury, and to do everything possible to distract her mind from the war by amusements and mental dissipation.

It was then that the Princess Gedroyc, a member of the highest nobility, who has become one of the most prominent women doctors of Russia, obtained the confidence of Her Majesty. She told her that the immense suffering among the soldiers could only be relieved by intelligent, properly trained women, and that the expression of aimless, purely emotional sympathy might do more harm than good.

The Czarina then began to throw herself into the organization of her hospital with much enthusiasm. It was equipped in the most perfect manner and placed under the direction of the Princess Gedroyc.

The Czarina and her two older daughters, the Grand Duchess Olga and the Grand Duchess Tatiana, then took a thorough course of training in the care of the

Why the Czarina's Mind Has Been Restored

By A. K. Vandeventer, Ph. D.,

The Distinguished American Psychologist.

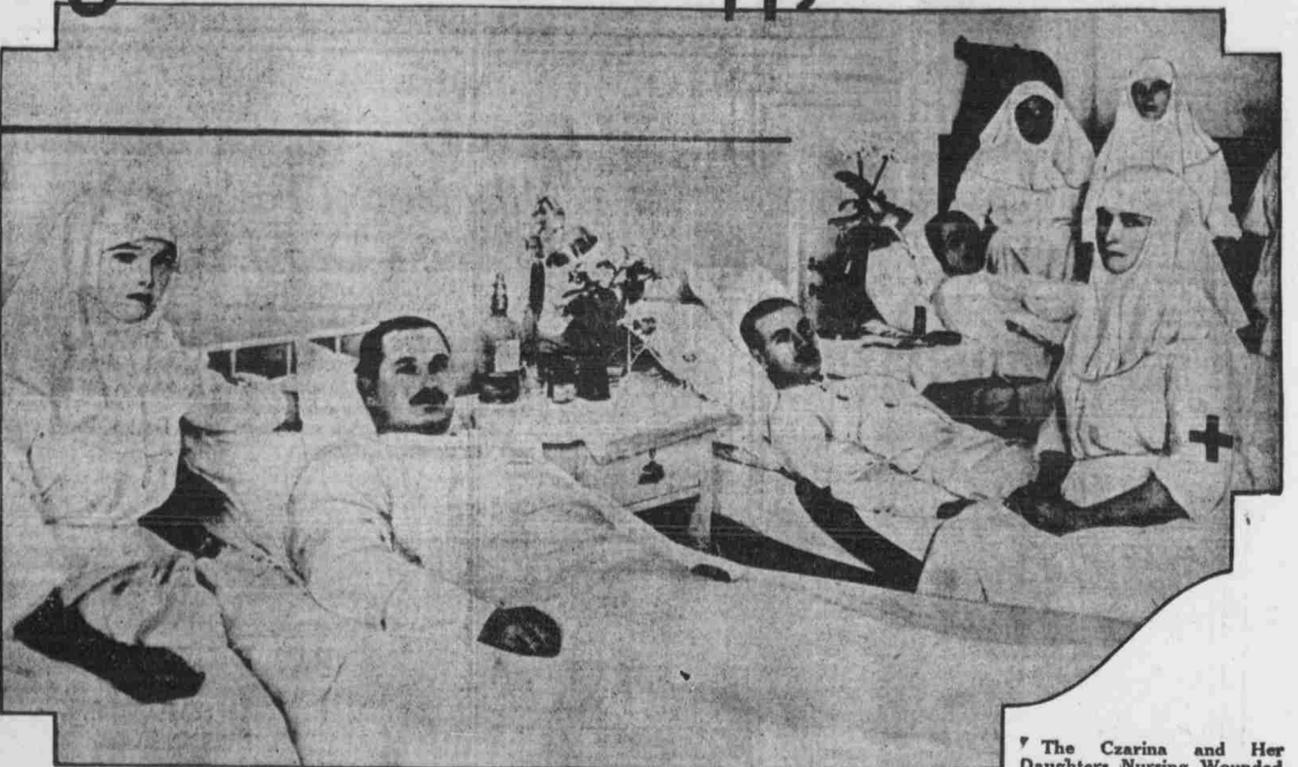
ALTHOUGH the occurrence must seem strange to a lay mind, there is nothing surprising to the alienist in the statement that the Czarina of Russia has recovered from her mental disease under the influence of her war occupations. That which unbalances the minds of sane people may in some cases restore the equilibrium of the mentally unbalanced.

From the accounts we have received of the Czarina's former condition we must believe that she was suffering from a mild form of melancholia. A sensitive and emotional young woman at the time of her entry into the Russian court, her whole nature was repeatedly shocked by the terrorist attempts on the life of her husband, herself and their family, by the intrigues constantly pursued in court circles, and by the frequently strange and erratic outbursts of the Russian character. The burden of repeated maternity increased the strain on her physical organism, and the

best possible experience in their hospital. They took examinations like other war nurses and showed themselves thoroughly qualified for their work. It may be remarked that they have not had the same amount of study as regular trained nurses, but it must be remembered that it has been found absolutely necessary in all countries to qualify war nurses after less than the former period of training. The great difficulty of the doctors has been to protect the soldiers from nurses with no training at all.

The Czarina has given an amount of hard labor to this hospital which she probably never dreamed of, and which no Queen in Europe can equal. She works at the hospital with her daughters from 9 a. m. to 3 p. m. every day, and often much later. She invariably returns in the evening, and sometimes, when she has a dangerously wounded patient, she stays there all night.

The Court Hospital accommodates two hundred soldiers and thirty officers. There is a perfectly equipped operating theatre, a commodious surgical dressing ward, and an up-to-date laboratory for X-ray work and research.



The Czarina and Her Daughters Nursing Wounded Soldiers in the Court Hospital, at Tsarskoe Selo, an Occupation Which Has Restored Her Mind to a Normal Condition.

6 Photos by Brown & Green.



The Czarina Assisting a Surgeon to Operate on a Soldier in Her Own Hospital.

Her Self-Sacrificing Ordeal Amid the Woe and Misery of the Army Hospitals Saves Russia's Empress from Hopeless Insanity



The Grand Duchesses Olga and Tatiana, the Two Pretty Older Daughters of the Czarina, Who Are Assisting Her in Her Nursing Duties.

take the soldier's hand and chat with him if he is well enough to listen. By the time he has learned that she is the Czarina he has become too accustomed to her ministrations to feel embarrassed.

The two pretty young daughters of the Czarina behave in the same professional yet friendly way. Many a poor fellow, with his spirit nearly crushed out of him by months of privation and dreadful perils, followed by terrible wounds, has been cheered up and brought to life again by the sympathetic smiles and gentle hands of these two charming young women.

The Czarina had no sooner begun to do this practical work among the wounded than a great change was noted in her manner and appearance. She lost the worried, harassed, melancholy air she had worn for many years. She even lost the intense nervousness she had exhibited at the slightest noise, such as the creaking of a board or the turning of a door handle. She acquired a cheerful though grave manner, thoroughly self-controlled and self-confident.

During an interval between her duties at the hospital the Czarina confessed to the director that she had experienced a complete mental and physical change since she had been there. Her Majesty's remarks on this subject have been conveyed

to your correspondent, for she wishes everybody to know how pleased she is with her experience in the hospital.

"I have forgotten all my worries and ailments since I have been here," said the Czarina. "It is impossible to think of myself in the presence of all these poor fellows, who are enduring such real troubles when I used to make myself miserable over imaginary ones. My only interest in life is to see my patients get better. It is strange that the sight of so much suffering does not make one despondent, but the fact that one can work for them makes one hopeful and even cheerful. If I were only a visitor, making them a visit of sympathy, the sight would make me miserable. That often happened to me in other days when I made visits to hospitals, but now that I know how to do something for them the feeling is quite different.

"The patience and cheerfulness with which most of them bear their sufferings are a lesson to me. Many of them are crippled for life, and yet they are thankful to be alive. We who have all the material things we can desire and yet are not happy, have a great deal to learn from the poor, and that is the best opportunity I have ever had to learn."

When the patients are convalescent they are sent to recuperate in Finland, where

amid beautiful surroundings, they regain strength, and in most cases are ready to return to fight the enemy. Tsarskoe Selo is not suitable for the last stage of treatment, for this little town, besides Her Majesty's hospital, has numerous private institutions in which several thousand wounded are always being cared for.

The hospital which has thus been equipped is in a wing of the Czar's Palace. In rooms which still retain the royal furniture are white bedsteads with the wounded lying in them. Every day a "sanitary" train from different parts of the theatre of war brings many carriages full of wounded directly to Tsarskoe Selo. Count Schoulenburg, who was formerly the principal court official, is the chief of the sanitary train, which is named "The Tsarevich Train," after the Crown Prince Alexis.

The train possesses an operating theatre for urgent cases and almost every hospital appliance in miniature. Especial care is taken of the seriously wounded, beds are arranged as stretchers, and one end of the carriage can be entirely opened. Thanks to this the wounded are thus easily moved, avoiding all difficulties which may occur in turning the bed through a doorway.

These carriages which do not possess this ingenious device are used for patients who are only slightly wounded; but here, again, one of the doctors who belongs to the staff of the train has invented a stretcher which avoids much of the common discomforts of being carried in this way. They are longitudinally and horizontally flexible, and consequently they pass through any doorway with a semi-circular movement, and all the time the position of the patient is comfortable.

Every carriage has electric bells and telephones. The train goes as near as possible to the firing line, and motor-cars or horse vehicles are sent to advanced positions to fetch in the wounded. The train arrives in Tsarskoe Selo at the Czar's private station, which is not open to the public. The Czarina very often meets the train in person. The chief of the train gives a full account of his wounded, and they are directed to different hospitals. Every wounded man is ticketed with the name of the hospital to which he is dispatched.

After the arrival of the wounded in hospital all linen is changed, they are bathed and placed in comfortable beds, and among them all, like guardian angels, the Tsarina and her daughters give them every help and their sympathy. Those hundreds of wounded will go to different villages and towns, to remote parts of the vast land of Russia, carrying with them the memories of the good Tsarina, who has shown to all a mother's love for her children, while she on her part must be no less grateful to them for having rescued her from an unfortunate mental condition.